

INSULATED BEVERAGE HOLDER WITH HANDLE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application claims priority from Provisional U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 60/453,554, filed on March 12, 2003 and incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to insulated beverage holders and containers. In particular, the present invention is directed toward a beverage holder having an attached handle or strap for carrying a beverage container.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Insulated beverage container holders are known in the art, and soled under such trade names as KOOZIES and the like. Many are constructed from polyurethane foam tubing, cut to suitable lengths, and fitted with a flat round bottom piece of similar foam material, usually provided with a drain hole.

[0004] These original flexible beverage containers suffered from a number of drawbacks. The glues used to attach the two pieces together often failed over time (or even in transit to the stores), and without the bottom piece in place, the apparatus had to be discarded. The items were also bulky and thus more difficult to ship. Attempts to compress these Prior Art KOOZIES would aggravate the glue seam failure problem. In addition, these devices, being rather primitive, were also not very aesthetically pleasing.

[0005] Even earlier devices attempted to use Styrofoam as an insulation material. However, the durability and shipping characteristics of such devices has proven problematic, and they have largely disappeared from the market.

[0006] Other types of insulated beverage containers are known. For bottled beverages, insulated jackets are known made from polyurethane or wetsuit materials, provided with a zipper or Velcro™ fastener, to encapsulate a bottle with flexible foam insulating material. While these devices are attractive and well made, the cost of installing zippers or other fasteners makes them somewhat expensive.

[0007] Long, U.S. Patent No. 5,048,734, issued September 17, 1991 and incorporated herein by reference, discloses an insulated container jacket with a belt loop. This belt loop is attached via Velcro™ type fasteners and is a fairly complicated multi-piece design.

[0008] A one-piece beverage cooler is known in the art and serves as a basis for the preferred embodiment of the present invention. Figures 11-20 illustrate this Prior Art beverage holder. Figure

11 is a front perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of a prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its field of use. As illustrated in Figure 11, when a can 130 is inserted into the apparatus 100, the apparatus 100 assumes a roughly cylindrical shape of can 130. Note that bottles and other containers may be inserted into the apparatus 100 as well as cans 130. In this prior art, the handle 110 of the first embodiment is omitted to make a more compact and less expensive to produce design.

[0009] As illustrated in Figure 11, a number of fingers of a persons hand 120 may wrap around the apparatus 100, securely holding the combined can 130 and insulated beverage container holder 100. Note the large surface area of the apparatus 100 lends itself to the application of logos, designs and the like.

[0010] Figure 12 is a rear perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 11, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its field of use. The apparatus 100 may be formed of foamed polyurethane, neoprene, or the like. In one embodiment, neoprene (e.g., wetsuit material) of approximately 3mm thickness may be used. Other thicknesses may be used depending upon desired insulation qualities and cost targets. For example, thicknesses may range from 2 mm to 6 mm, but in the preferred embodiment is 3mm thick.

[0011] Figure 13 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art presented solely for the purposes of better understanding the appearance of the prior art in the assembled form and the construction of the apparatus in assembled form. As illustrated in Figure 13, in one embodiment of the present invention, the cylindrical portion of the

apparatus 100 may be formed from a single piece of cut foamed polyurethane or neoprene in the pattern illustrated in Figure 13, comprising three portions; a first rectangular section 100A, a second rectangular section 100B, and a roughly circular portion 150 connecting first rectangular section 100A and second rectangular section 100B. Stitching section 140 may be used, as will be illustrated below, to assemble the apparatus 100.

[0012] Figure 14 is a left side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Figure 15 is a right side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein.

[0013] Figure 16 is a front elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 14, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Figure 17 is a rear elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 15, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein.

[0014] In Figures 14-17, the stitched 140 and un-stitched portions 155 of the design are illustrated. The un-stitched portions 155 allow the apparatus 100 to fold flat when not in use, making it easier to store and ship. These un-stitched portions 155 also allow the apparatus 100 to "breathe" and drain any condensate or water from within. Note that while illustrated as stitched, other

forms of attachment may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the prior art. For example, heat welding, ultrasonic welding, glues or other adhesives or even hook-and-loop fasteners may be used.

[0015] Figure 18 is a perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art. Figure 19 is a top view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art, illustrated in the field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Figure 20 is a bottom view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 of the prior art. These Figures further illustrate unstitched portions 155. The apparatus 100 may be sized for a conventional soda or beer can, or may be made in other sizes for larger or smaller cans (e.g., juice can or 22 oz beer can, or the like).

[0016] What is needed in the art is an insulated container jacket which may be readily manufactured inexpensively, and also shipped flat or compressed without damage, and provide a handle or strap or the like in a manner which does not complicate the design or increase the design cost.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0017] The present invention provides a simple to construct insulated beverage container jacket with a built-in handle or strap. The apparatus may be constructed of foamed urethane or neoprene (or the like), which may be covered with cloth on the outside surface (or both inside and outside surfaces). The apparatus may be formed such that it may be constructed from a single blank of

material or from a limited number of pieces of material, in order to reduce the amount of cutting and sewing or gluing necessary to manufacture the item.

[0018] The handle or strap may be provided as a wide portion of neoprene or foamed polyurethane (or the like) on one or both sides of the apparatus. The width of the handle or strap allows the user to securely hold the apparatus and also allows a logo or design to be displayed on the apparatus. The width of the handle or strap also provides strength to the handle or strap when made of such materials such as 3mm neoprene or the like. In the preferred embodiment the handle or strap is in the range or 2.5" to 4" wide (preferably about 3" wide).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0019] Figure 1 is a front perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its field of use.

[0020] Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 1, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its field of use.

[0021] Figure 3 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention presented solely for the purposes of better understanding the appearance of the present invention in the assembled form.

[0022] Figure 4 is a left side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0023] Figure 5 is a right side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein. Note that the handle portion extends around the side of the apparatus and appears thin in this view as it is viewed from the side.

[0024] Figure 6 is a front elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 4, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0025] Figure 7 is a rear elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 5, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0026] Figure 8 is a perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention.

[0027] Figure 9 is a top view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention, illustrated in the field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0028] Figure 10 is a bottom view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of the present invention.

[0029] Figure 11 is a front perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its field of use.

[0030] Figure 12 is a rear perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 1, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its field of use.

[0031] Figure 13 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art presented solely for the purposes of better understanding the appearance of the prior art in the assembled form.

[0032] Figure 14 is a left side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0033] Figure 15 is a right side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein. Note that the handle portion extends around the side of the apparatus and appears thin in this view as it is viewed from the side.

[0034] Figure 16 is a front elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 4, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0035] Figure 17 is a rear elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art, from the reverse side of Figure 5, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder in its intended field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0036] Figure 18 is a perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art.

[0037] Figure 19 is a top view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art, illustrated in the field of use with a can inserted therein.

[0038] Figure 20 is a bottom view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder of the prior art.

~~[0039]~~ Figure 21 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder with handle of an alternative embodiment of the present invention, where the handle is formed partially integral with the material of the beverage holder.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

~~[0039]~~—[0040] Figure 1 is a front perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of a present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its field of use. As illustrated in Figure 1, when a can 130 is inserted into the apparatus 100, the apparatus 100 assumes a roughly cylindrical shape of can 130. Note that bottles and other containers may be inserted into the apparatus 100 as well as cans 130.

~~[0040]~~—[0041] As illustrated in Figure 1, a number of fingers of a persons hand 120 may be inserted into handle or strap 110, securely holding the combined can 130 and insulated beverage container holder 100. Note the large surface area of the handle or strap 110 lends itself to the application of logos, designs and the like. Moreover, the location and use of the handle or strap 110 places the logo in a position away from the user so that it may be seen by others.

~~[0041]~~—[0042] Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 1, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its field of use. The apparatus 100 may be formed of foamed polyurethane, neoprene, or the like. In one embodiment, neoprene (e.g.,

wetsuit material) of approximately 3mm thickness may be used. Other thicknesses may be used depending upon desired insulation qualities and cost targets.

~~{0042}~~—[0043]— Figure 3 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention presented solely for the purposes of better understanding the appearance of the present invention in the assembled form and the construction of the apparatus in assembled form. As illustrated in Figure 3, in one embodiment of the present invention, the cylindrical portion of the apparatus 100 may be formed from a single piece of cut foamed polyurethane or neoprene in the pattern illustrated in Figure 3, comprising three portions; a first rectangular section 100A, a second rectangular section 100B, and a roughly circular portion 150 connecting first rectangular section 100A and second rectangular section 100B. Stitching section 140 may be used, as will be illustrated below, to assemble the apparatus 100.

~~{0043}~~—[0044]— Handle or strap 110 may comprise an independent portion which may be sewn to first rectangular section 100A or second rectangular section 100B. Alternately, handle or strap 110 of Figure 3 may be formed as part of this single piece, and folded over at the top of the apparatus 100 and stitched together.

~~{0044}~~—[0045]— Figure 4 is a left side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Figure 5 is a right side elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its

intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Note that the handle or strap 110 portion extends around the side of the apparatus 100 and appears thin in this view as it is viewed from the side.

~~10045~~—[0046] Figure 6 is a front elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 4, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein. Figure 7 is a rear elevational view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention, from the reverse side of Figure 5, illustrating the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 in its intended field of use with a can 130 inserted therein.

~~10046~~—[0047] In Figures 4-7, the stitched 140 and un-stitched portions 155 of the design are illustrated. The un-stitched portions 155 allow the apparatus 100 to fold flat when not in use, making it easier to store and ship. These un-stitched portions 155 also allow the apparatus 100 to "breathe" and drain any condensate or water from within. Note that while illustrated as stitched, other forms of attachment may be used without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For example, heat welding, ultrasonic welding, glues or other adhesives or even hook-and-loop fasteners may be used.

~~10047~~—[0048] Figure 8 is a perspective view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention. Figure 9 is a top view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention, illustrated in the field of use with a can 130

inserted therein. Figure 10 is a bottom view of the insulated one-piece beverage holder 100 with handle 110 of the present invention. These Figures further illustrate how wide the handle or strap 110 may be in relation to the overall apparatus 100 and also illustrate unstitched portions 155. The apparatus 100 may be sized for a conventional soda or beer can, or may be made in other sizes for larger or smaller cans (e.g., juice can or 22 oz beer can, or the like).

~~10048~~—~~10049~~ _____. The handle or strap 110 portion of the present invention may also be applied to designs other than as shown in the drawings. For example, the handle or strap 110 may be applied to a Prior Art KOOZIE or the like stitched or glued to the side of the KOOZIE.

~~10050~~ _____. Figure 21 is a flattened, partially disassembled view of insulated one-piece beverage holder 2100 with partially integral handle 2110 of the present invention presented solely for the purposes of better understanding the appearance of the present invention in the assembled form and the construction of the apparatus in assembled form. As illustrated in Figure 21, in this embodiment of the present invention, the cylindrical portion of the apparatus 2100 may be formed from a single piece of cut foamed polyurethane or neoprene, comprising three portions; a first rectangular section 2100A, a second rectangular section 2100B, and a roughly circular portion 2150 connecting first rectangular section 2100A and second rectangular section 2100B. Stitching section 2140 may be used, as will be illustrated below, to assemble the apparatus 2100.

~~10051~~ _____. Handle or strap 2110 may comprise an integral portion which may be sewn to first rectangular section 100A. Handle or strap 2110 of Figure 21 may be formed as part of this single piece, and folded over at the top of the apparatus 2100 at point 2200 and stitched together.

~~[0049]~~—[0052] While the preferred embodiment and various alternative embodiments of the invention have been disclosed and described in detail herein, it may be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope thereof.